

## **Ogimori Inari Shrine**

Ogimori Inari Shrine is the largest Shinto shrine in Taketa and one of the most prominent Inari shrines in Kyushu. The Inari deity is associated with rice cultivation and believed to ensure an abundant harvest and protect the local community. As is customary at many Inari shrines, the approach to the shrine encompasses a succession of bright red torii gates donated by devotees. Statues of foxes, believed to be the messengers of the Inari deity, can be seen in many sizes throughout the grounds.

There has been a shrine on the site since 1616, when Nakagawa Hisamori (1594–1653), the lord of the Oka domain (now the area around Taketa), established a small hillside sanctuary. The present-day shrine took shape in the mid-1800s, when Hisamori's descendant Hisaaki (1820–1889) governed the Oka domain. It is said that Hisaaki dreamed of Inari warning him about assassins ahead of a journey to Edo (now Tokyo), and he built Ogimori Inari out of gratitude to the deity.

The shrine is particularly busy during the first few days of the new year, when worshipers from throughout Kyushu visit to pray for success and protection in the year ahead. Visiting Ogimori Inari at other times of the year is a more peaceful experience, and sweeping views over Taketa can be enjoyed from the top of the stone staircase leading up to the shrine.